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THE TEACHING OF GEOGRAPHY.

By J. H. Raundrup, M.Sc.

(*Continued from page* 693.)

I have said little, so far, about the necessity for the constant use of maps—it is such an axiom in any geographical teaching worthy of the name, that for a time the point escaped my memory as being one necessary to emphasize; but the constant use of maps—wall-maps, sketch-maps drawn on the black-board, and maps drawn by the boys—is of course essential. As a foundation for all one's work, one must have a good wall-map of the district, on a fairly large scale, not necessarily pretending to any great accuracy of detail, but—and here frequently comes the difficulty—it must be contoured, and coloured accordingly; that is to say, the shades should become darker as the height above sea-level becomes greater. I have found it wiser not to use maps with too fine gradations of colour; a map with all land below 300 feet coloured green, all land between 300 feet and 600 feet above sea-level light brown, and all land above 600 feet dark brown, is generally quite enough to give a fairly clear idea of the surface of any part of the British Isles. Arnolds, of Leeds, publish a most excellent contoured map of Yorkshire; but once he leaves Yorkshire, the unfortunate teacher of geography begins to meet with difficulties; and I think that very often, after inspecting the stock-in-trade of various educational establishments, he will find it best to make his own contoured wall-map; such, at any rate, has been my experience in dealing with most parts of the British Isles. If he require a map of any Continent, and can afford to pay about double the price of the ordinary English wall-map, he can rejoice himself by obtaining, needless to say from the all-providing Germany, one of the almost perfect Sydow-Habenicht maps, which Philips generally keep in stock.

In all contoured maps it is of the greatest importance that uniformity in colouring should be preserved; given this, in a very short time the first glance at a map will tell the class the main facts about the physical structure of a country—the boys will have acquired that most useful and strangely rare

accomplishment, the art of "reading a map." Of course, certain maps defy all power of "reading"—maps with each county a level mass of bright colour, and with some hundred names to the square foot—but such maps, though useful as reference maps, are quite out of place as the ground-work of any teaching of geography.

Arnolds, of Leeds, are also bringing out a set of beautifully modelled and fairly cheap relief maps of various counties and countries in the British Isles, whose value as a supplement to the large wall-maps can hardly be over-estimated. A constant comparison of the contoured map with the model will lead to a very clear understanding of the former; and, one contoured map once really understood, all others follow as a matter of course.

But model and wall-map are not enough; there must be those on the one hand, but on the other the teacher must have his ever-helpful and long-suffering companion, the black-board; and of that he must make constant use for illustration, not by plan only, but by elevation and section. It is a most useful exercise for the boys to attempt a section across any piece of country, along a line shown across a contoured map; and the teacher's rough sections upon the black-board are quite essential for any clear explanation of river-basins, rain-fall, influence of winds, and many other points. In all black-board work the use of coloured chalks will prove of great advantage.

Lastly, to fix the detailed geography of a county by means of the ever-helpful eye, and at the same time to cultivate exactness and neatness of work, the boys should draw together, in class, at least two very careful maps of the district—one physical, showing merely contours, rivers, and lakes; the other industrial, showing coal fields, distribution of minerals, and main industries (each represented by some one colour). Thus Leeds, in our maps, would be underlined in green and red, representing the woollen and engineering industries. The introduction of many names into the maps should be avoided. Only those should be inserted which are really familiar, and for small boys the initial of the name is at first enough. But one point I consider very important; the map must not be copied from a ready-made and complete map, but must be built up by the teacher on the blackboard,

and by the pupils in their map-books, simultaneously. This will impress the structure of a country, and any other details of a map, far more strongly on the memory; and as the work goes on there is naturally an informal intermittent discussion upon the features of the country from which I believe a great deal is often learnt, and I think that there is no part of our school work which is more generally enjoyed by the boys than our map-drawing.

Possibly the idea of drawing a good map with considerable detail upon a black-board may strike some teacher as a matter of great difficulty. I can only say that I believe that I produce very respectable maps upon the board, and I can most confidently assert that there can be few people with less natural aptitude for drawing than I have. All that is necessary, for both teacher and pupil, is a framework, drawn to scale on the board and in the books, of what we call "guiding-lines," which are rubbed out again as soon as they have served their purpose. Each map will mean some six hours' work in half-hour periods.

There is another branch of our work—useful not only as making a boy's idea of a map a more vivid and serviceable thing, but also as illustrating the practical uses of geometry and arithmetic—which consists of what is called "needle surveying," *i.e.*, the mapping of a small part of the immediate neighbourhood from one carefully measured base-line, by triangulation, the angles being read by the aid merely of a compass. Fair work can be done with an ordinary pocket compass, but a specially sighted compass improves the work very much. Boys generally enjoy such work immensely, and its usefulness can be still further increased by insisting upon the very careful production of a map of the neighbourhood surveyed, from the figures contained in the boys' rough note-books, using protractors to plot out the angles. I have obtained very successful work of this character from boys of ten or eleven.

Such is the method in which one may attack Yorkshire, and after that perhaps Lancashire, the four northern counties, the Midlands, England south of the Thames, and Wales in succession—of course with constant comparison and connection, and never treating any one district as if it were some isolated unit.

At the end of this first stage in our geographical work the boys should have a fair idea, not only of the geography of England and Wales, but of the meaning of a map, and of the various causes and influences that affect the formation, fertility, industries, and prosperity of a country. The action of climate and rivers being understood with some clearness, it is now possible to proceed to the more full and systematic study of Scotland, a country whose varied and well-defined features make it a most excellent subject. I will make an effort to avoid wearisome detail here, and will shortly indicate the further expansion of our method in dealing with Scotland, or with any other part of the earth.

Starting from given data, the contoured map and the prevalent wind, the facts are gradually deduced by the boys—of course under guidance—by regular reasoning, almost as regular as that of Euclid, and far more interesting to the average boy. It is upon this, in my opinion, that geography may base its claim to be considered a scientific school subject, that it is not a mere collection of accidental facts, but a genuine piece of reasoning on scientific principles. The facts deduced are recorded in notes—best copied word by word from the black-board in the case of small boys, to whom the taking of useful notes, unaided, is almost an impossibility—and by the liberal use of sketch-maps, in addition of course to the careful drawing of two maps in the way I have already described. For these sketch maps, to save time, it is well to use printed outline maps, upon which are filled in (simultaneously with the same work upon the black-board) any details that may be required, coloured chalks being used, and the meaning of the various colours shown by a marginal table. In the case of Scotland, in addition to the carefully-drawn physical and industrial maps, sketch maps—quick and bold, with no pretence at fine detail, but showing the required facts at a glance—may be made giving the rainfall, the distribution of arable land, the chief crops, the density of population, the distribution of minerals, and the fisheries. In the case of Ireland, a map of the bogs may be added; in the case of larger areas, such as Australia, other maps will suggest themselves, showing range of temperature, influence of ocean currents, isothermal lines, distribution of animal life, lines of exploration, trade-routes, etc. One of the charms of

geography as a school subject is its endless expansion and variety, as different parts of the world are dealt with.

Returning to Scotland, and to the distribution therein of mountain and plain, the contoured map shows most vividly the huge mountain masses which cover all the northern part of Scotland, and are especially massed towards the West Coast. Next, the fact of the prevalent wind being S.W. is given, adding the question, "What kind of wind will this be?" This leads to another question, "Where does it come from?" And, referring to their maps of the world, the boys will notice the great tracts of tropical sea, the equatorial Atlantic, from which the south-west wind has come, and will at once come to the conclusion that it must be a warm and moist wind. If, as they should be, the main ocean currents are marked on the map, someone will probably notice that the Gulf Stream keeps the S.W. wind company on its journey towards Scotland, keeping up the temperature and preventing rain; and hence the class will arrive at the idea of copious stores of moisture, brought by the winds from the great evaporating cauldron of the tropical Atlantic to the great mountain masses lying close to the western shores of Scotland.

Having already become familiar with the effect of mountains in producing rainfall, the boys will deduce the facts as to Scotland's heavy rainfall—heavy especially on the west, and decreasing gradually towards the east. The opportunity should not be missed, here as in other matters, of comparison with the facts already known about England and Wales. Here a sketch-map would naturally come in, showing in colours the rainfall in the different parts of Scotland. One great advantage these sketch-maps possess—appealing strongly as they do to the boy's eye, as he fills in the various patches of bright colour, they cannot fail to stimulate his powers of inquiry and comparison.

This rainfall map of Scotland is certain to produce useful inquiries as to the reason of the small rainfall along the East Coast, which will bring in the consideration of the east winds which are its one cause, and the comparison of their lack of moisture and drying powers, after their long land journey, with the precisely opposite properties of the south-west winds after their long sea journey.

Having got at some rough idea of the Scotch climate, we now proceed to deduce further facts about it by the further

consideration of Scotland's position in the world. Using the map of Europe and of the Atlantic, let the boys note any facts which may be useful, and, having obtained several, deduce everything that the boys can be led to deduce from them, and this will be no brief matter.

For instance, "Scotland is an island," volunteers some slightly inaccurate observer. At once there comes the consideration of the difference, and the causes of that difference, between an island climate and a continental climate, with vivid contrasting, say of Glasgow and Moscow, with their similar latitude but very different ranges of temperature.

Noticing the latitude, and comparing Scotland's distance from the North Pole with its distance from the equator, the general coldness of the Scotch climate will follow, with its resulting mist and snow, and their effects upon scenery, farming, and life generally. Boys will always be interested in graphic accounts of a Highland winter, with all the possible joys of being hopelessly snowed up, with unlimited snow-balling. There must be some providential twist in the constitution of a boy, which enables him to rejoice in bad weather. So, to the boy, the Highland winter will certainly be fascinating; and then comes the thaw; and here again, in the accounts of the terrible floods of such rivers as the Spey or the Dee, there is ample material of interest; and the picture of all the damage wrought to roads and bridges by these floods, and of all the work necessary each spring to repair this damage, will give the boys some idea of the difficulties of life in mountain districts, and of the hardy Highlanders produced by such difficulties.

Again we turn to the map, and someone will probably notice that Scotland lies out to the west of Europe, exposed to the full force of the Atlantic breakers, as the western gales hurl them upon its shores; the results of this, the broken coast-line and countless islands of the west, will contrast very sharply with the almost unbroken lines of the more sheltered east coast; and, at this point, it is not difficult to find pictures which will show all the beauty of the western lochs and sounds.

At the same time, the fact may be mentioned that no point in Scotland is fifty miles from the sea; the importance of this fact will be seen by the class later in the work, but its mere assertion will certainly lead to much testing of its accuracy by scale measurement.

Collecting the facts that they have so far discovered, the boys can now make further deductions, especially as to the nature of the Scotch rivers, the joint product of mighty mountains and heavy falls of rain and snow—with their short rocky courses and their constant eating away of the land, especially during their destructive floods. Noticing carefully that in this it is not a few large rivers that work alone, but that they are aided by countless streams, rivulets, and rills, an idea of the barren Highlands, stripped of their soil by all these agencies, soon follows. From this again the boys may deduce the unfitness of the Highlands for agriculture, with a glance at the life of the "crofter," and his difficulties and perseverance, and a comparison of the crop he so hardly earns from his patch of rocky soil, with the rich crops of, for instance, the East Anglian farmer, with his level and fertile fields. Some mention, too, will naturally be made of the chief northern crops, and of the northern limits of such plants as the oak, wheat, etc., all shown upon a sketch map, upon which the arable and useless land appear in different colours, while lines mark the different limits.

From the climate and general condition of the Highlands follows also a description of their animal life—of their huge sheep-farms and desolate deer-forests; and from this again we arrive at the main occupations of the Highlanders. Lead the boys to consider the area of a sheep-farm or deer-forest, and the number of men employed upon either, with the life they must lead; and soon they will find out much about the hardihood, resource, and bravery of the Highlanders—with a comparison of the robber of former days with the soldier of to-day—and also about their scanty numbers. Here a sketch-map, showing the density of population of each county, will enforce the difference in this respect between the Highlands and the crowded manufacturing districts.

Many other facts may be derived from the same starting point—the character of the rivers; for instance, the impossibility of much inland river-traffic, the abundance of river-fish, and the absence of much rich and flat country. A similar course of treatment will yield a fairly clear idea of the Lowlands, with their bleak hills and fertile dales, and their thriving farms, the product rather of human industry and determination than of any natural advantages. And now, in

Galloway and Annandale and Teviotdale, the contrast between past and present will be enforced by pictures of many a ruined abbey or border stronghold—and border raids and cattle-liftings are a subject upon which boys are generally well informed.

Much may now be added to the map showing agricultural and other farming industries—the cattle of Ayrshire, the horses of Clydesdale, the ponies of Galloway, the apples of Strathmore—until almost all Scotland has answered our former question:—"What do *you* do for the general good?"

One important part remains—the central plain, with its great manufactures and closely-crowded towns, whose existence has already been noticed when the sketch-map showing density of population was drawn. Turn therefore to minerals—discuss once more the essential importance, commercially, of coal and iron—and, by drawing a map showing the distribution of the chief Scotch minerals, prove how coal, iron, and the human race generally are found together. It will now, probably, be found best to follow the more stereotyped treatment of our subject, and to deal under separate headings with the different manufactures—with some special account of flax, hemp, and jute, and of their history and uses—the commerce, the fisheries, and the people themselves.

And, lastly, some time may well be specially devoted to the ever-interesting isles off the northern and western coasts. This done, with all possible comparison and illustration, and Scotland will begin to seem quite an intimate acquaintance, even to those boys who have never been lucky enough to set foot upon its heather.

I have mentioned some adjuncts to the efficient teaching of geography, but have scarcely dwelt enough upon one of the most important—the use of illustrations, which can now-a-days almost always be procured in plenty, and whose utility is evident—while the school museum will often supplement these by animal, vegetable, or mineral specimens, by implements or manufactured products. The more of concrete things that can be introduced, the more hope there is of clearing away the enveloping mist of words and names, and of making the boys' knowledge of some part of the world a real knowledge of facts and things, not a mere acquaintance with names.

And, as the little, firmly-sticking pegs by which much broader knowledge may be fixed, the teacher can afford to despise no little interesting or curious facts which he may be able to glean from personal experience, narrative of exploration or travel, or even from his daily newspaper; while books such as Whitaker's Almanac are of course of the greatest value, in addition to the regular text-books and atlases.

A geographical scrap-book, for cuttings from newspapers, is very useful, though, needless to remark, it must not be treated as a collection of absolute, accurate facts in these days of editorial enterprise.

And now I am at last drawing to the end of this imperfect description of an imperfect method—but a method which for that reason is always interesting to the teacher, in that there is every scope for improvement and expansion in it. So many are the possible adjuncts to the full and proper teaching of geography, that I have been unable to even touch upon all, and have, for instance, omitted all mention of the great help which may be obtained from the lantern, with carefully prepared slides, showing not only pictures, but maps, sections, etc. Needless to say, the most should be made of the actual personal experience of both teacher and pupil, but that is a point which the boys will take care is not neglected.

Taken upon some such lines as I have tried to describe, I have no hesitation in saying that geography will equal, if not excel, any subject taught in any school in usefulness, variety, fascination for both pupil and teacher, and—the really important point—in power of stimulating thought and interest and love of reasoning, and thereby truly developing the mental powers of the child. At the same time—no unimportant matter—it provides an excellent connecting link between the study of history, of natural science, and of geometry, so that it plays one important part in binding the whole school work into an harmonious whole, always, of course, provided that the teaching of the other subjects is carried on upon somewhat similar lines. And I believe that the teacher of geography is generally justified in believing that there is roused in almost all his pupils, by their work, at least some small amount of wondering, admiring gratitude at the thought of how marvellously this earth is adapted to the manifold wants of the human beings who dwell upon it.

AN APOLOGY FOR THE MEDIOCRE PERSON.

By Grace M. Gwynne,

who

"Does nothing in particular,
And does it very well."

In the storm and stress of modern life, which has become almost wholly competitive, each individual struggling for distinction, each trying in their own province to press to the front, it sometimes occurs to the thinker, "What room nowadays is there for Mediocrity? Life is success, failure is annihilation!" And from the obscurity of dull country towns and the loneliness of great crowded cities where the failures hide themselves, comes the retort, "What rest or happiness is there in success? Is it not to us you turn for soothing for your jaded brain and nigh-worn-out body, after your so-called successes?"

The very dictionary takes their part, and says, "Mediocrity is a middling state; a mediocrity of success is most favourable to morals and happiness, and mediocrity of talent will generally ensure respectability."

Mediocrity is the state typical of our world. Were we much better, we should belong properly to the world of angels; were we much worse, we should qualify for the world of fiends. We hear it said of someone who has died, "Ah, they were too good for this world; they whom the gods love die young." And if any denizen of this sphere dare to be worse than the average, is he not assisted with a rope to reach the world of worse things: do we not say, "He is not fit to live"?

There are two ladders by which men may rise above the average, they are called Goodness and Genius. They spring from mediocrity, but lead from earth to heaven, and the angels lean down and stretch out a helping hand to those who climb.

Contentment is a rung very low down on either of these ladders. Upon contentment you early set your foot, and leave it far below. As æsthetic knowledge grows, so dwindle